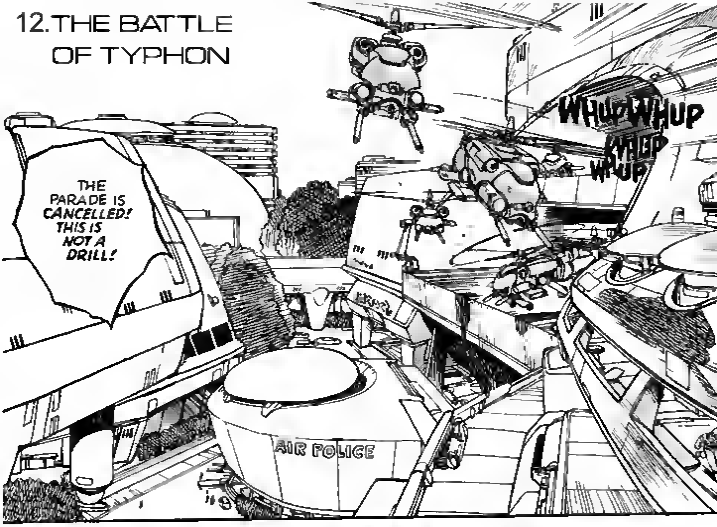
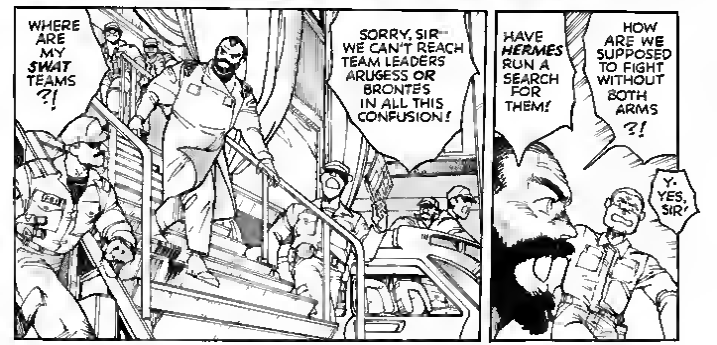
12. THE BATTLE OF TYPHON

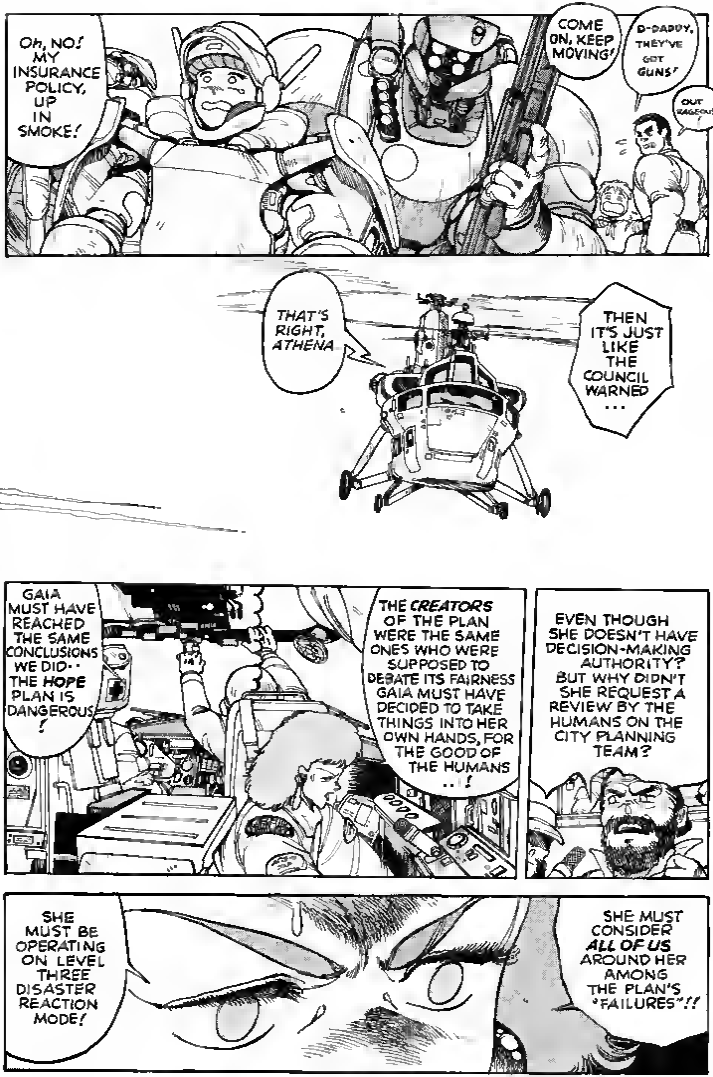


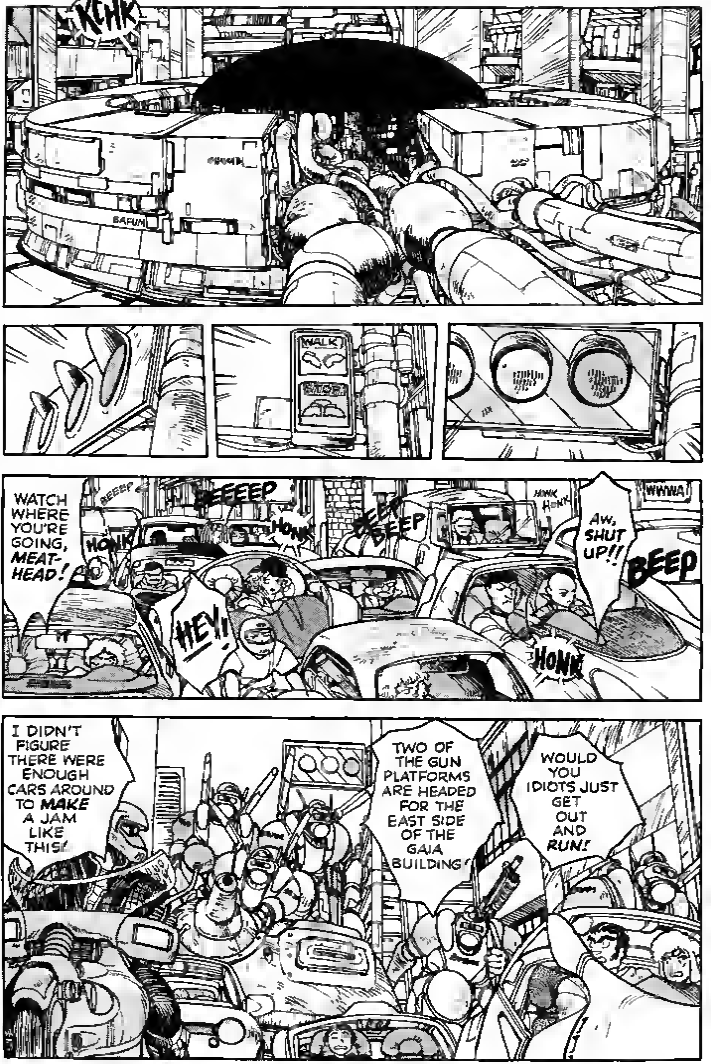

WHERE ARE MY SWAT TEAMS ?!
SORRY, SIR— WE CAN'T REACH TEAM LEADERS ARUGESS OR BRONTES IN ALL THIS CONFUSION!
HAVE HERMES RUN A SEARCH FOR THEM!
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO FIGHT WITHOUT BOTH ARMS ?!
Y- YES, SIR!

POLICE
TANK
MAYER
2
POLICE
AH EHHH!!
IT'S
FLYING
?!
AAA!

VRTT
POLICE
CREATURE COMFORTS
VRTTT
AHA!
VRKT
.....
.....
DOES THIS THING HAVE A DOWN-LINK?
YES, MA'AM.
PATCH ME THROUGH TO CENTRAL, WILL YOU?

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?!
WE'VE BEEN SHELLED!
SHELLED?!?
THAT DAMNED GAIA! WHY DOES SHE WANT TO SMASH TARTARUS?!
ACTIVATE THE SHOCK SUPRESSORS IN THE NURSERY!
BOOST THE DOMINANCE LOADING FOR DELTA WAVES! DON'T LET THEM HEAR ANY SCREAMS OR EXPLOSIONS!
EXIT
GAIA'S GONE BERSERK! YOU FIGURE THIS IS SOME KINDA PLOT?
WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER! HELP ME EVACUATE THE DATA ROOM!
THE IMPACT SITES ARE TOO WIDELY DISPERSED- WE CAN'T FIGHT ALL THE FIRES AT ONCE!
WHAT ABOUT THE FIRE-WALLS?
NO GOOD! THEY'VE BEEN BREACHED!
THE BOMBARD-MENT PATTERN'S CLOSING IN ON THE CORE-- FIVE METERS A SECOND!
WHAM
WHKOOM
TARTARUS


OH, NO! MY INSURANCE POLICY, UP IN SMOKE!
COME ON, KEEP MOVING!
D-DADDY, THEY'VE GOT GUNS!
OUT RAGEOUS
THAT'S RIGHT, ATHENA
THEN IT'S JUST LIKE THE COUNCIL WARNED ...
GAIA MUST HAVE REACHED THE SAME CONCLUSIONS WE DID.. THE HOPE PLAN IS DANGEROUS!
THE CREATORS OF THE PLAN WERE THE SAME ONES WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO DEBATE ITS FAIRNESS GAIA MUST HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE THINGS INTO HER OWN HANDS, FOR THE GOOD OF THE HUMANS ..!
EVEN THOUGH SHE DOESN'T HAVE DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY? BUT WHY DIDN'T SHE REQUEST A REVIEW BY THE HUMANS ON THE CITY PLANNING TEAM?
SHE MUST BE OPERATING ON LEVEL THREE DISASTER REACTION MODE!
SHE MUST CONSIDER ALL OF US AROUND HER AMONG THE PLAN'S "FAILURES"!!


KCHK
BAFUM
WALK
STOP
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, MEAT-HEAD!
BEEEP
HONK
HEY!!
BEEP BEEP
HONK HONK
AW, SHUT UP!!
WWWA
BEEP
HONK
I DIDN'T FIGURE THERE WERE ENOUGH CARS AROUND TO MAKE A JAM LIKE THIS!
TWO OF THE GUN PLATFORMS ARE HEADED FOR THE EAST SIDE OF THE GAIA BUILDING!
WOULD YOU IDIOTS JUST GET OUT AND RUN!

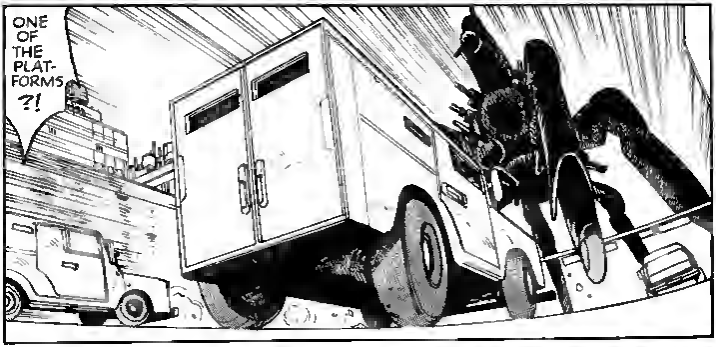
IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GO BACK TO BEING 'ARUGESS." I'LL GIVE YOU WHAT SUPPORT I CAN.
GOOD LUCK!
YOU! YOU PLANNED TO BUG OUT THIS WAY RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING!
WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE-- CINDERELLA ?!
?
BUTTON IT, DEUNAN. WE'RE MOVING OUT.
NOW THE DAMN THINGS ARE MOVING WEST ?!
COME ON, ALREADY! MAKE UP YOUR MIND!
HEY!
GIVE TOP PRIORITY TO SHUTTING DOWN GAIA! JUST PROTECTING TARTARUS ISN'T ENOUGH! DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET ME THROUGH TO ESWAT!!
WORRY ABOUT THE CIVILIANS LATER!

DETOUR THROUGH JAPAN-TOWN, THEN-
WHUP WHUP
WHUP
WHAAAG!
WAAAHH!
BKOOM
CLIMB!! ALL UNITS CLIMB!!
WHUP
WHUP
WHUP
AIR POLICE
OLYMPUS POLICE

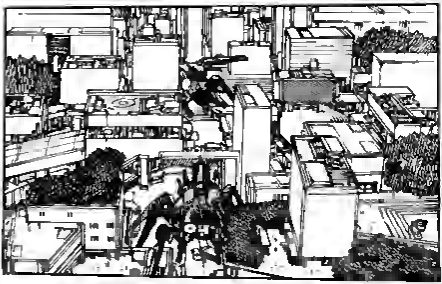
FOOM
FOOM
SHIT! THERE'RE SO MANY DAMNED PHONE LINES AROUND HERE, NO WAY WE CAN FLY NOE!*
THOSE HELIBORNE UNITS ARE GONNA BE LATE-- THEY'RE FLYING OUT THE CIVVIES FIRST!
WHUP WHUP WHUP
KOOM
AAAH!
!
AS SOON AS YOU GET A CLEAR SHOT, FIRE YOUR MISSILES--
?!
WHA?! WHERE THE HELL DID THEY GO?!
WHUP
WHUP WHUP
AIR POLICE

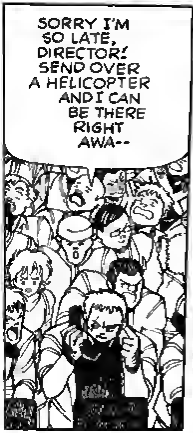
*NAP OF THE EARTH: SKIMMING THE GROUND TO AVOID DETECTION--A STANDARD HELIBORNE TACTIC.

WHAT?! GAIA'S USING GUN PLATFORMS TO ATTACK TARTARUS?! ARE YOU SERIOUS?
HAS THIS BEEN CONFIRMED BY ATHENA? VERY WELL, THEN.
THERE'S BEEN A SITUATION UPDATE--SIX OF THE GUN PLATFORMS HAVE EVADED THE AIR POLICE.
AND ARE ON A COURSE THAT WILL TAKE THEM TO THE TARTARUS ARCOLOGY.
ESWAT
E.S.WAT
SQUADS FOUR, FIVE AND SIX--REVERSE COURSE.
SQUAD ONE COMES WITH ME TO TAKE OUT GAIA'S OPTICAL COMMUNICATIONS TOWER. SQUAD TWO, GIVE US FIRE SUPPORT. THREE, CORDON THE AREA. FOUR, SET UP NEAR THE ENTRANCES TO THE TARTARUS BLOCK--WHEN THE PLATFORMS SHOW, KNOCK OUT THEIR ANTENNAS. FIVE--
SKREEE
ESWAT


ONE OF THE PLAT-FORMS ?!

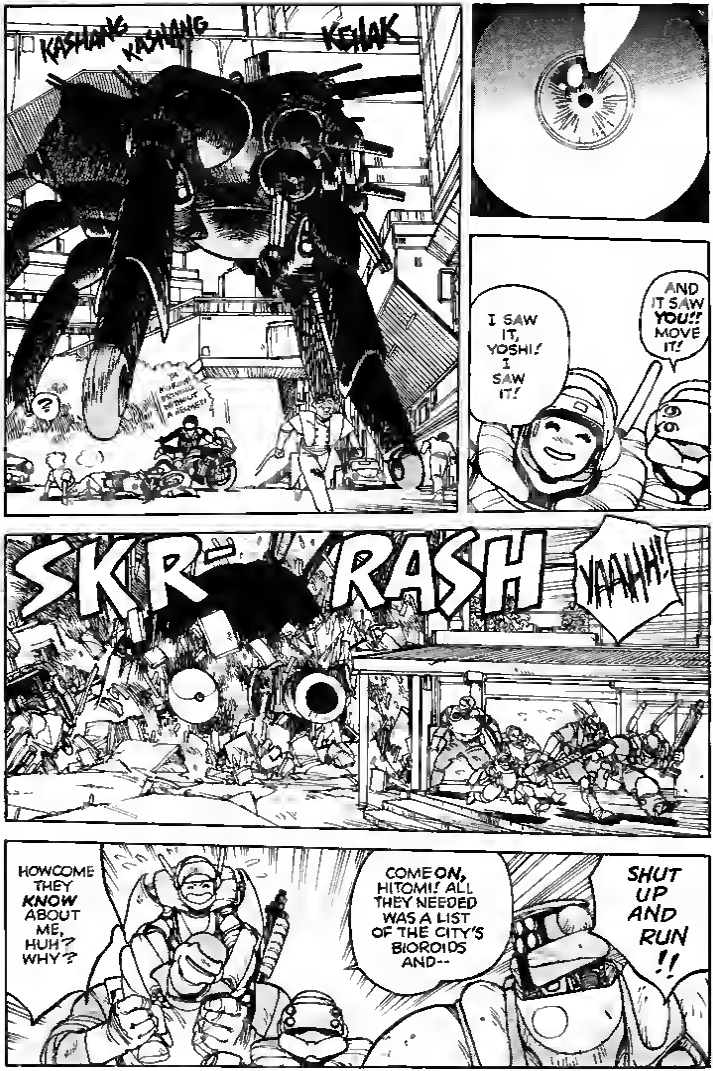
THEY OVERTOOK US!
IT'S OKAY-- WE'VE PLANNED FOR THIS...



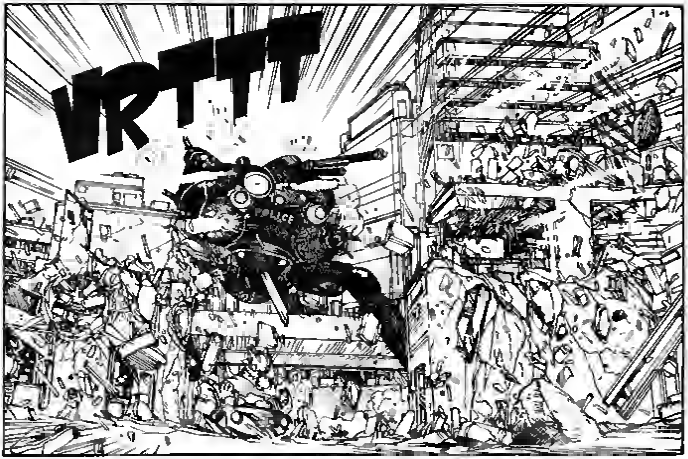

SORRY I'M SO LATE, DIRECTOR! SEND OVER A HELICOPTER AND I CAN BE THERE RIGHT AWA--

KWANG KWANG

JUST LISTEN TO ME, WILL YOU?!
AIEEE
ARE YOU STILL ON ABOUT THAT?
BUT...!
LOOK! PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE!
IF THEY SUSPECT THERE'S EVEN ONE SPY OUT THERE, THEY'LL TURN THE DEPARTMENT UPSIDE DOWN! HE CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE HIS COVER BLOWN-- THIS ISN'T HIS ONLY MISSION!
BUT, BRIAREOS! DON'T YOU THINK HE--
NO ARGUE DURING OP, STU-PID.
YOU SHUT UP!
BESIDES, THIS WAY HE CAN GET A BETTER LOOK AT THE ENEMY!
SKRASSSH!


KASHANG KASHANG
KSHAK
?
I SAW IT, YOSHI! I SAW IT!
AND IT SAW YOU!! MOVE IT!
SKR-
RASH
YAAHH!
HOWCOME THEY KNOW ABOUT ME, HUH? WHY?
COME ON, HITOMI! ALL THEY NEEDED WAS A LIST OF THE CITY'S BIOROIDS AND--
SHUT UP AND RUN!!

BRIAREOS! YOU AND THE OTHERS GO ON TO GAIA!
KASHANG
POLICE
KLIK
I'LL HOLD THEM OFF HERE!
HOW?!
BB AM!
KCHIK
WRAM
QUICK!
WHA?!
Eh?


VRTTT

GYAA!!

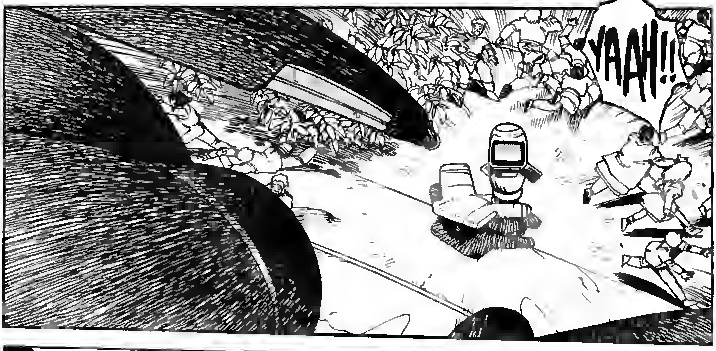
AAA!
SCAK

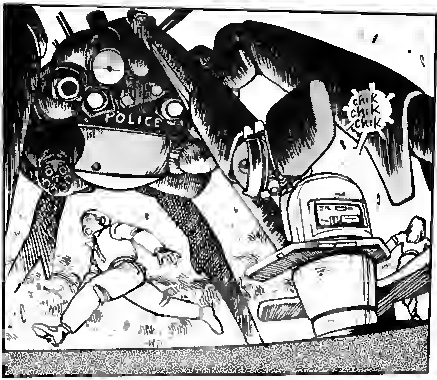
BAM
BAMBAM
SPAK
SKNCH
DEUNAN!
KRAK

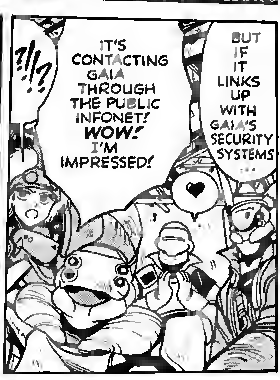
TOO HEAVY !!
BRRTTT
!!
SKRASH

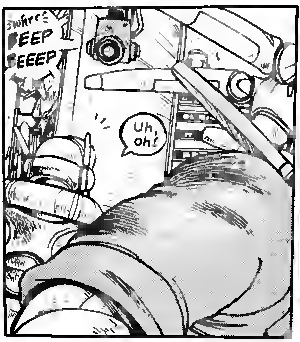
DEUNAN!
DEUNAN!!
Uhh
WH... WHERE'S MY KISS, PRINCE CHARMING?
IDIOT!
YOU REALLY HAD ME WORRIED!
GEEZ! QUIT FOLLOWING US, WILL YA?!
LINEAR TUBE
MAGLEV TRAIN ENTRANCE
HEY! OVER HERE!
YO!

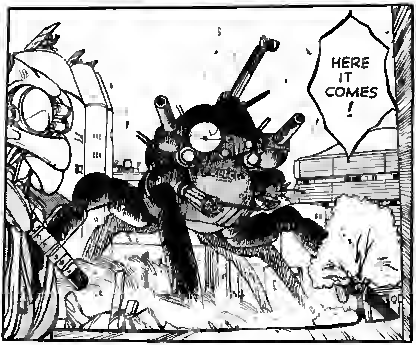
SKRASSH
KEEEE!
AAA!
GRRK
TZT
KSHANG
KSHANG
MOVE OUT!
HOLD IT!


YAAH!!

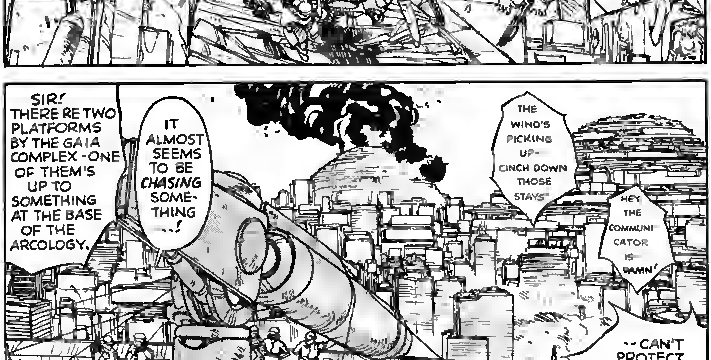

POLICE
CHIK CHIK CHIK


?!!?
IT'S CONTACTING GAIA THROUGH THE PUBLIC INFONET! WOW! I'M IMPRESSED!
BUT IF IT LINKS UP WITH GAIA'S SECURITY SYSTEMS...


SWIRR
BEEP
BEEEP
Uh, oh!

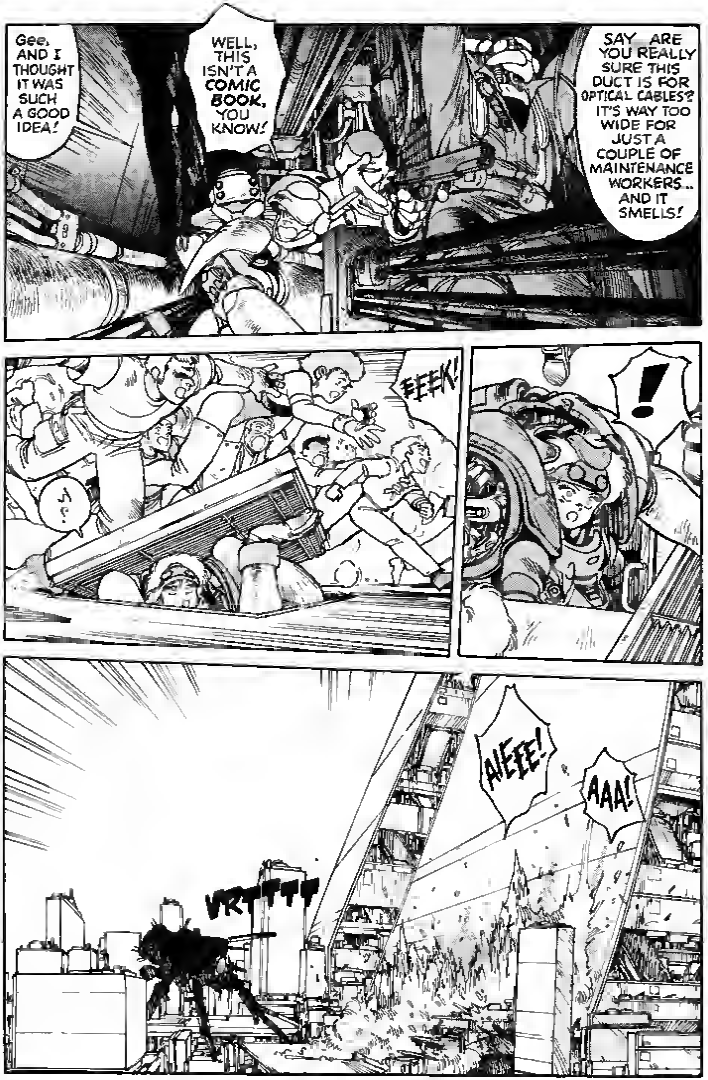

HERE IT COMES!

I KNOW A KEEN PLACE IN BASEMENT THREE WHERE WE CAN GET INTO THE OPTICAL FIBER DUCTS!
THAT'S PERFECT, HITOMI! GO FOR IT!
VRNTTT
IT'LL TAKE US ALL THE WAY TO AN H BLOCK, TOO!


SIR! THERE RE TWO PLATFORMS BY THE GAIA COMPLEX - ONE OF THEM'S UP TO SOMETHING AT THE BASE OF THE ARCOLOGY.
IT ALMOST SEEMS TO BE CHASING SOMETHING...!
THE WINO'S PICKING UP- CINCH DOWN THOSE STAVES!
HEY THE COMMUNICATOR IS WAKIN'
...CAN'T PROTECT TARTARUS?! WHAT ABOUT THEIR ANTENNAS? THEY WHAT? FIREPOWER? I CAN'T HEAR YOU-- RETRANSMIT!

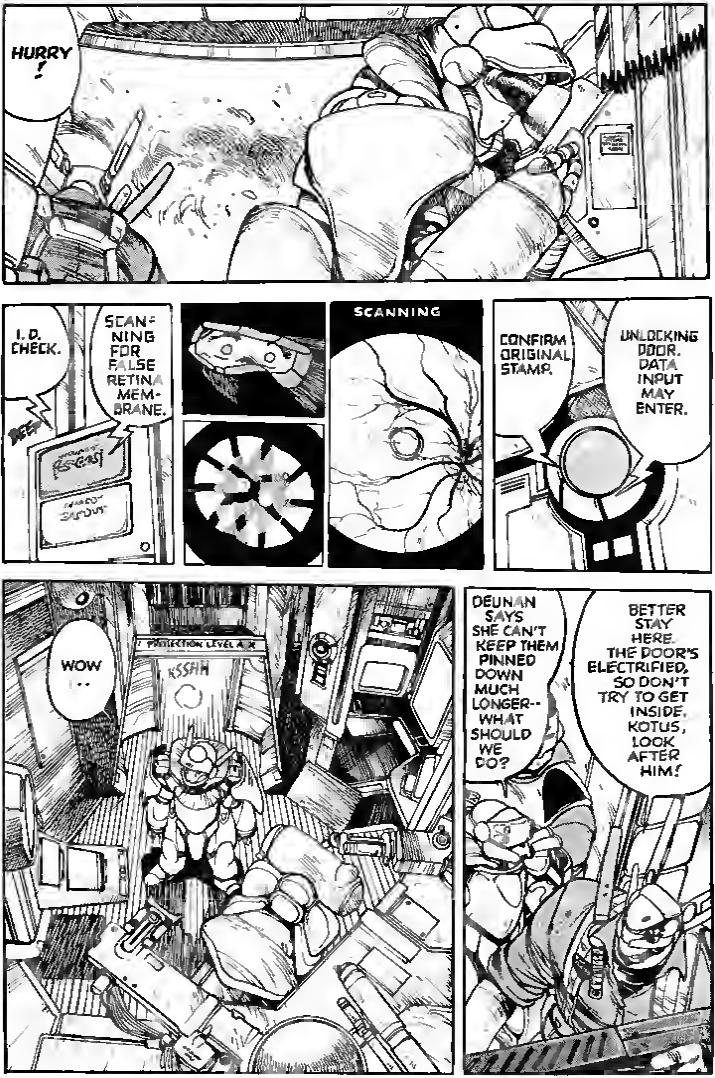
SIX OF THEM?! TAKING UP POSITIONS AROUND TARTARUS? DAMN IT, THEY MEAN TO LAUNCH AN ULTRAVIBE ATTACK! BLOW THE PLAZA OUT FROM UNDER THEM IF YOU HAVE TO, BUT DON'T LET THEM GET SET UP!!
COLONEL, SIR!

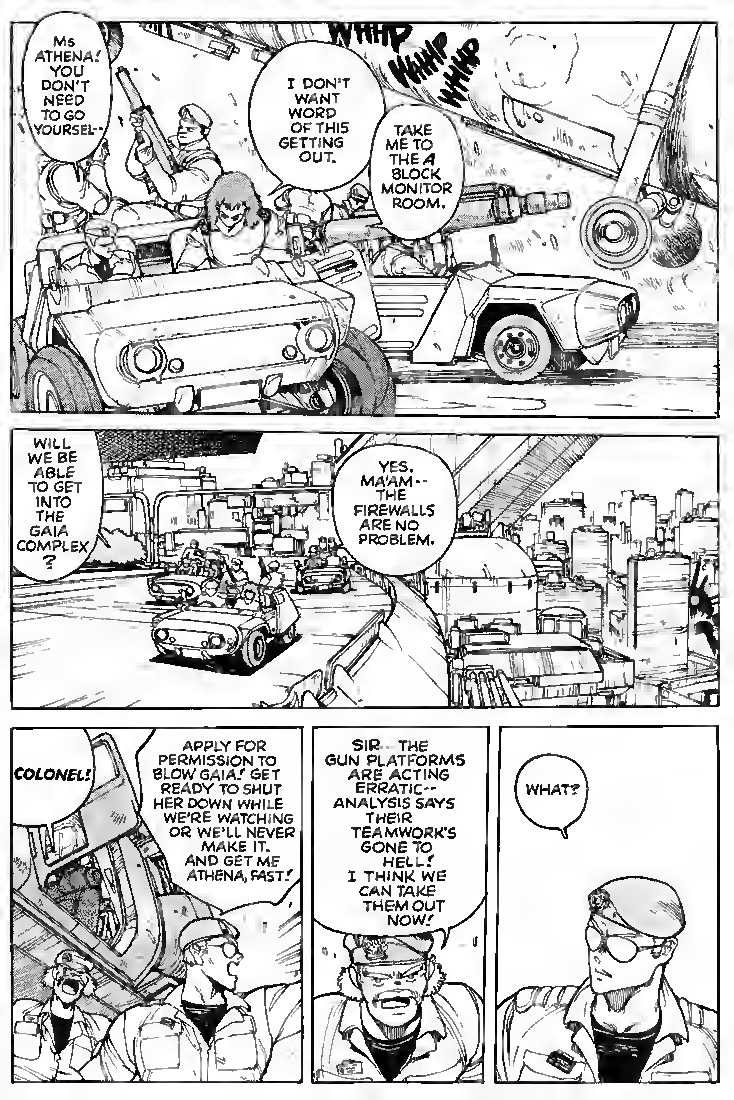
WELL, IS IT UNDER CONTROL? YOU DON'T NEED TO BLOW THE TOWER?
YES, SIR! I MEAN, NO SIR! WE CUT THE CABLES AND SECURED THE COMMUNICATION GRID, BUT...
!
THERE'S *STILL* NO CHANGE IN THEIR MOVEMENTS, EVEN WITH THE COMMUNICATION GRID OUT?!
SSSSS
WELL, AT LEAST THIS IS CLEANER THAN A *SEWER!*
HOW'S YOUR GYRO, BRI?
I SWITCHED OVER TO MY INNER EAR.
WE CAN'T GET THROUGH HERE IN THESE SUITS! WOULDN'T IT MAKE MORE SENSE TO GO BACK TOPSIDE?

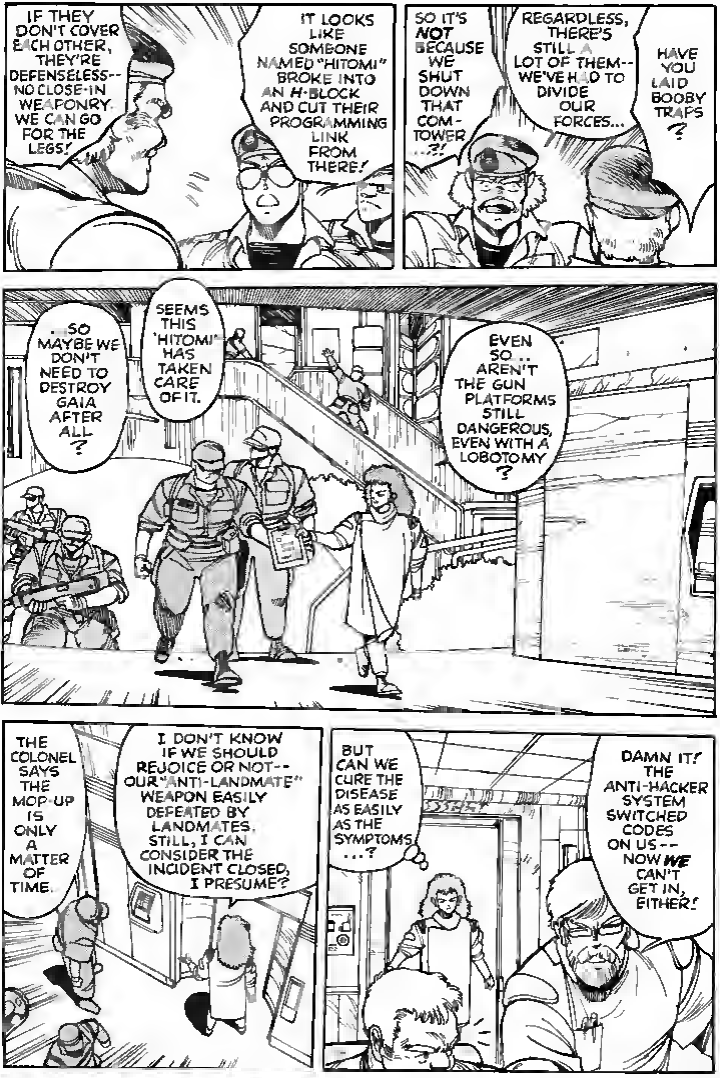

Gee, AND I THOUGHT IT WAS SUCH A GOOD IDEA!
WELL, THIS ISN'T A COMIC BOOK, YOU KNOW!
SAY ARE YOU REALLY SURE THIS DUCT IS FOR OPTICAL CABLES? IT'S WAY TOO WIDE FOR JUST A COUPLE OF MAINTENANCE WORKERS... AND IT SMELLS!
EEEK!
A!?
!
AIEEE!
AAA!
VRTTTT

YA!!
KOOM
YAHH!
POLICE
WOW!
HITOMI!
WHA-!
ACTUALLY, THERE'S A WHOLE BUNCH OF "H BLOCKS." THEY CALL THEM LOCKBOXES-- ONE'S RIGHT OVER THERE.

!
!
H
HEY! FREEZE !!
BAMBAMBAM
SHAK
SHAK
DAMN IT, WHERE IS HE?
DON'T SHOOT! IT'S ME!
BLAM
BRRRT
OW!
BAM
SKRAK
CARD! CARD!
H
BEEP
BRRRT


HURRY!
I.D. CHECK.
SCANNING FOR FALSE RETINA MEMBRANE.
BEEP
SCANNING
CONFIRM ORIGINAL STAMP.
UNLOCKING DOOR. DATA INPUT MAY ENTER.
WOW...
PROTECTION LEVEL A-X
KSSHH
DEUNAN SAYS SHE CAN'T KEEP THEM PINNED DOWN MUCH LONGER--WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
BETTER STAY HERE. THE DOOR'S ELECTRIFIED, SO DON'T TRY TO GET INSIDE. KOTUS, LOOK AFTER HIM!


Ms ATHENA! YOU DON'T NEED TO GO YOURSEL--
I DON'T WANT WORD OF THIS GETTING OUT.
WHIP WHIP WHIP
TAKE ME TO THE A BLOCK MONITOR ROOM.
WILL WE BE ABLE TO GET INTO THE GAIA COMPLEX ?
YES, MA'AM-- THE FIREWALLS ARE NO PROBLEM.
COLONEL!
APPLY FOR PERMISSION TO BLOW GAIA! GET READY TO SHUT HER DOWN WHILE WE'RE WATCHING OR WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT. AND GET ME ATHENA, FAST!
SIR-- THE GUN PLATFORMS ARE ACTING ERRATIC-- ANALYSIS SAYS THEIR TEAMWORK'S GONE TO HELL! I THINK WE CAN TAKE THEM OUT NOW!
WHAT?


IF THEY DON'T COVER EACH OTHER, THEY'RE DEFENSELESS--NO CLOSE-IN WEAPONRY. WE CAN GO FOR THE LEGS!
IT LOOKS LIKE SOMBONE NAMED "HITOMI" BROKE INTO AN H-BLOCK AND CUT THEIR PROGRAMMING LINK FROM THERE!
SO IT'S NOT BECAUSE WE SHUT DOWN THAT COM-TOWER ...?!
REGARDLESS, THERE'S STILL A LOT OF THEM--WE'VE HAD TO DIVIDE OUR FORCES...
HAVE YOU LAID BOOBY TRAPS?
. SO MAYBE WE DON'T NEED TO DESTROY GAIA AFTER ALL?
SEEMS THIS "HITOMI" HAS TAKEN CARE OF IT.
EVEN SO... AREN'T THE GUN PLATFORMS STILL DANGEROUS, EVEN WITH A LOBOTOMY?
THE COLONEL SAYS THE MOP-UP IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.
I DON'T KNOW IF WE SHOULD REJOICE OR NOT--OUR "ANTI-LANDMATE" WEAPON EASILY DEFEATED BY LANDMATES. STILL, I CAN CONSIDER THE INCIDENT CLOSED, I PRESUME?
BUT CAN WE CURE THE DISEASE AS EASILY AS THE SYMPTOMS ...?
DAMN IT! THE ANTI-HACKER SYSTEM SWITCHED CODES ON US--NOW WE CAN'T GET IN, EITHER!

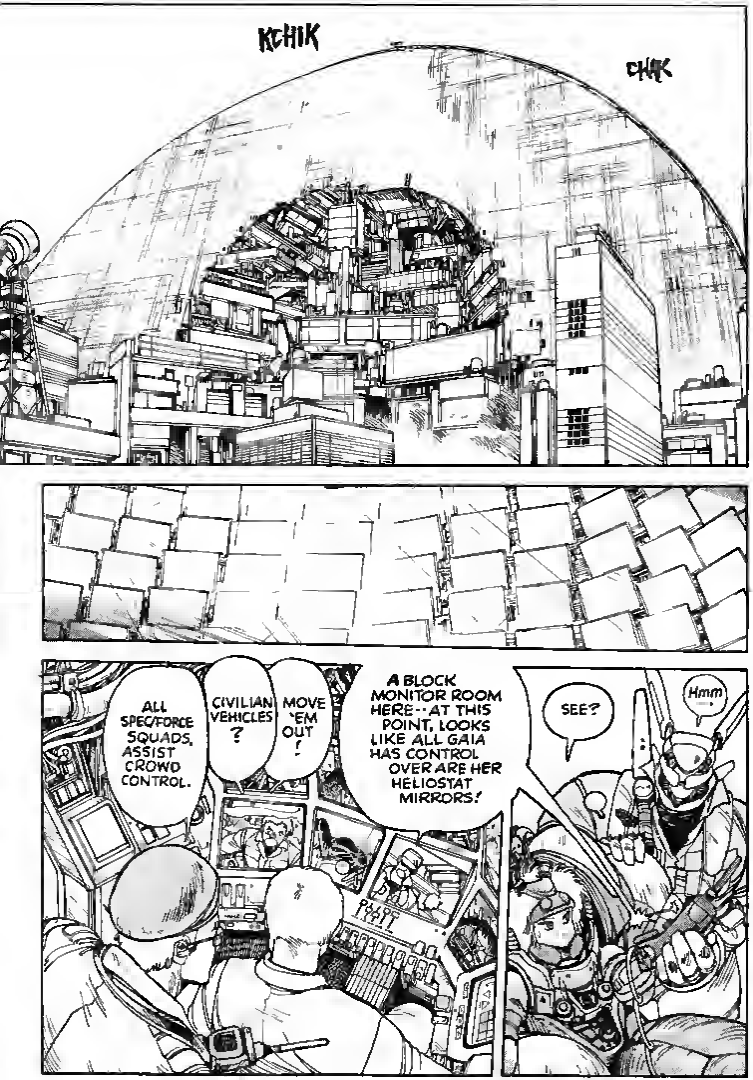
DIRECTOR ATHENA!
WHAT'S THIS I HEAR ABOUT US BIOROIDS ?!
WAS THE COUNCIL PROPOSAL REALLY-
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. REMEMBER, GAIA REJECTED THE COUNCIL'S DATA AND THE PROPOSAL ...
...IT DIDN'T REJECT US, NOT BIOROIDS OURSELVES.
THEN WHAT'S ALL THIS TALK BETWEEN TARTARUS AND GAIA?!
TAKE A LOOK-HERE'S A SUMMARY OF THE LONG CONVERSATION THEY HAD ABOUT THE HOPE PLAN.
OF COURSE, NO COMPUTER CAN DO ANYTHING THE PROGRAMMERS DON'T INTEND IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT--
YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PENCIL AND THE FINGERS THAT HOLD IT TO ME, THANKS.
BEEP
THE PROBLEM IS HOW WE DEAL WITH STRESS--IS THIS UTOPIA WE HAVE NOW THE WAY THINGS SHOULD BE, OR JUST THE OPPOSITE?
Hmph! HOPES VERSUS REALITIES, IS IT, GAIA? SOLVE THE PROBLEM WITH...
..."THIRD GENERATION BIOROIDS"?!

WHAT'S THIS HERE?! "THIS DESIGN PHILOSOPHY WAS ADOPTED IN THIRD-GENERATION AND CERTAIN SELECTED BIOROID UNITS. THESE UNITS HAVE NOT ENCOUNTERED STRESS PROBLEMS..."?! IS IT TALKING ABOUT THE COUNCIL?
IT MAY BE ONE WAY TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY, BUT IT'S NOT THE KIND OF THING A COMPUTER WOULD COME UP WITH ON ITS OWN...
AMAZING THIS PROBLEM NEVER SURFACED BEFORE
SO TARTARUS PREDICTED THE COUNCIL'S ACTIONS? AND EVEN THE KIND OF PLAN THEY WOULD COME UP WITH?!
THEN IT MUST HAVE KNOWN THERE WERE ENOUGH VOTES IN THE LEGISLATURE TO PASS IT, TOO. NO--WAIT A MINUTE!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE --THE CITY PLANNING TEAM PROGRAMMERS COULDN'T HAVE STAGED THE WHOLE THING...THE SACRIFICES WERE TOO GREAT!
COULD THE PROBLEM PREDATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF OLYMPUS ITSELF...? BUT THEN IT COULDN'T BE A PROGRAMMER PLOT AFTER ALL!
HAVE WE REACHED OUR LIMITS? BOTH BIOROIDS AND HUMANS?
CAN'T WE EVER RETURN TO EDEN?!

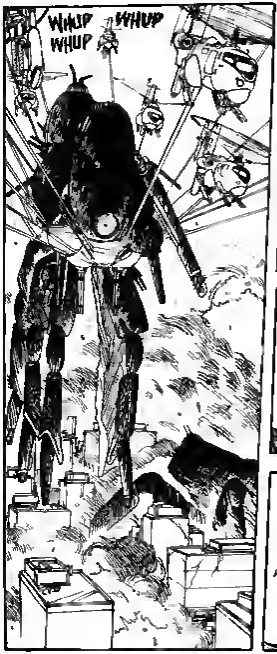
HEY! THE LIGHTS AND THE ELECTRO-BARRIERS WENT OUT!
?!
WAAH!
GET ME OUT OF THIS!
IT JUST SUDDENLY QUIT WORKING! I'M STUCK!
LOOKS LIKE EVERY-THING'S STOPPED, ALL RIGHT.
I WONDER IF THOSE SPIDER THINGS HAVE STOPPED, TOO.
BETCHA THEY'RE STUCK IN THEIR OWN WEB!
TUN-NEL!
IT WAS GROSS! IT TOOK A BLOOD SAMPLE, THEN CHECKED ME OUT WITH AN ENDOSCOPE, THEN LOOKED--
HEY, WHAT ABOUT THAT PASSAGE?
THAT? Oh, IT GOES STRAIGHT UNDER THE GAIA COMPLEX. THE DOOR POPPED OPEN WHEN THE POWER CUT.

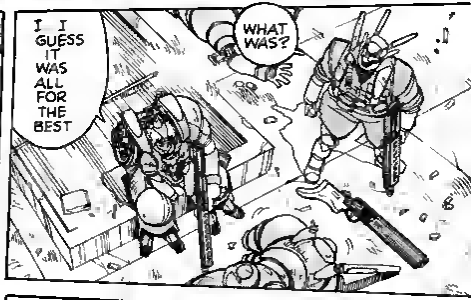
KLANK
WHOK
GIVE ME A DIRECT FEED TO THE COLONEL!
KRAK
WHO'S THIS?
DEUNAN KNUTE, SIR-- THE NEW ONE IN SQUAD FOUR!
WE WENT AHEAD AND USED HITOMI WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION... SORRY, SIR. HAVE THE PLATFORMS STOPPED YET? WHAT'S THAT..? YES, SIR I UNDERSTAND ...
BUT THE FIGHTING'S OVER, RIGHT, SIR?

LET'S JUST SAY THE POSSIBILITY SEEMS VERY HIGH. I'LL THINK OF HOW TO DEAL WITH YOU LATER, KNUTE!
WHUP
RIGHT NOW, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN SAVED BY LADY LUCK—
WHUP WHUP
EXCUSE ME, COLONEL--- WE'VE BROUGHT DOWN THE FIFTH GUN PLATFORM. THEY'RE LOCKING UP THE WIRES ON NUMBER SIX RIGHT NOW
JEEZ... LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO TARTARUS...!
GODDAMN GAIA!!
SURE IS BRIGHT...
?
MUST BE REFLECTING OFF GAIA'S HELIOSTATS...
WOW... IS IT REALLY OVER...?

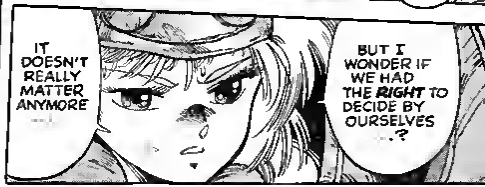

KCHIK
CHAK
ALL SPEC/FORCE SQUADS, ASSIST CROWD CONTROL.
CIVILIAN VEHICLES?
MOVE 'EM OUT!
A BLOCK MONITOR ROOM HERE--AT THIS POINT, LOOKS LIKE ALL GAIA HAS CONTROL OVER ARE HER HELIOSTAT MIRRORS!
SEE?
Hmm

WHKOOOM
POLICE


WHUP WHUP
WHUP

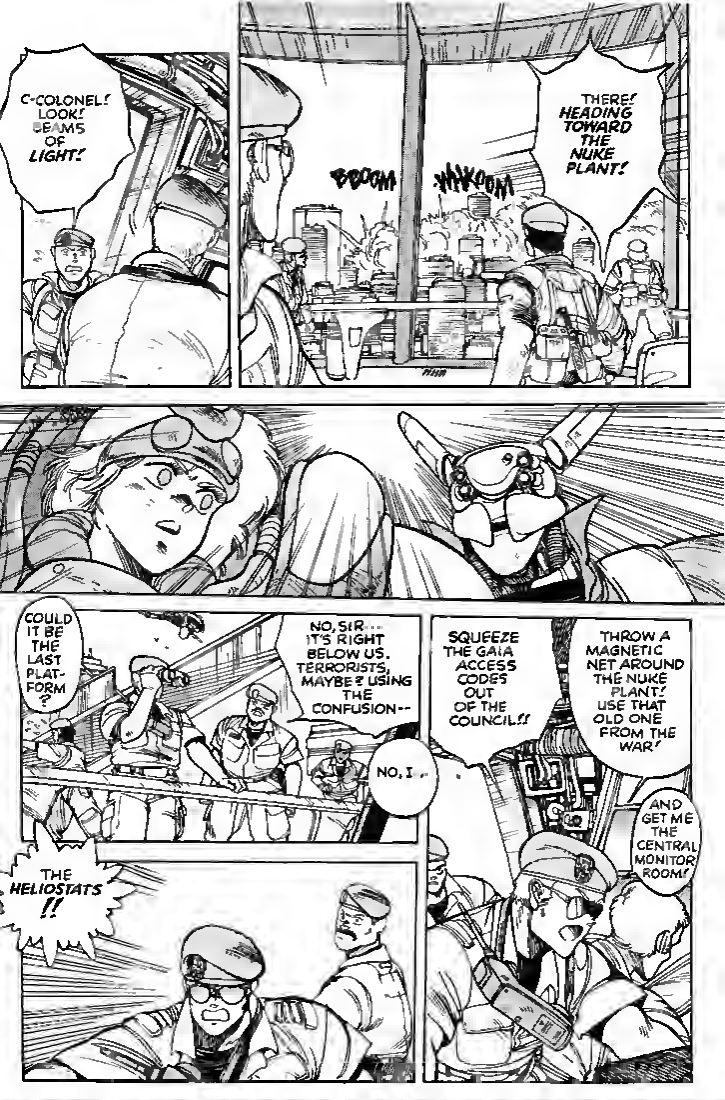

I I GUESS IT WAS ALL FOR THE BEST
WHAT WAS?

WHAT WE DID WHETHER IT WAS RIGHT OR WRONG ..
?
WELL ..


IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER ANYMORE ...
BUT I WONDER IF WE HAD THE *RIGHT* TO DECIDE BY OURSELVES ...?

WHAT A THOUGHTFUL, BEAUTIFULLY MADE TOY! THAT DAMNED COMPUTER STRIPS THE PEOPLE WHO USE IT OF THEIR ABILITIES, THEN DEMANDS THEY GET THEM BACK AGAIN
HOW SHOULD WE ACT? WHAT SHOULD OUR STANDARDS BE?
ONLY ONE LEFT IS OVER BY GAIA!
ROGER!
KANG
EVEN A PENCIL CAN KILL A MAN WITH ONE BLOW. IT ALL DEPENDS HOW YOU USE IT
IT'S JUST TOO DAMN HARD TO MAKE IT WORK, THIS CITY!
BKOOM
WHUP WHUP WHUP
WHUP
!?
COLONEL!
WHAT TH?!

BBOOM
BKOOM
WHOOM
WHAT THE HELL?!
THE HEAT...!
WAKOOM
KSHH
GYAA
SSSSS


C-COLONEL! LOOK! BEAMS OF LIGHT!
THERE! HEADING TOWARD THE NUKE PLANT!
BOOOM
WHOOOM
COULD IT BE THE LAST PLAT-FORM?
NO, SIR.... IT'S RIGHT BELOW US. TERRORISTS, MAYBE? USING THE CONFUSION--
NO, I...
THE HELIOSTATS!!
SQUEEZE THE GAIA ACCESS CODES OUT OF THE COUNCIL!!
THROW A MAGNETIC NET AROUND THE NUKE PLANT! USE THAT OLD ONE FROM THE WAR!
AND GET ME THE CENTRAL MONITOR ROOM!

HITOMI! WHAT'S THE QUICKEST WAY INTO GAIA'S GUTS ?!
?
I--
er--
I HAVE MAP DATA. ROUTE TO TARGET EXISTS IN H BLOCK
MA'AM. YOU SHOULD GO TO THE SHELTER--
I'M STAYING HERE.
COLONEL'S ORDERS, MA'AM ...
MY ORDERS, SOLDIER. THE COLONEL'S OUT-RANKED.
MUST EVACUATE ALL CIVILIANS TO SHELTERS. ARMORED VEHICLES OR HELICOP--
--CAN'T LAY A SMOKE SCREEN. THEN BUST THE GODDAMN HELIOSTATS' USE THE
--ARGET THE MISSILE SALVOS HALFWAY DOWN THE HELIO ARRAY. TRY--
--INK. CAN'T WE USE ONE OF THE GUN PLATFORMS TO--
....

#MangaProject on irc.Dal.net
presents: Appleseed